



MICHIGAN CHAPTER

November 7, 2011

To: Representative Foster and members of the
House Natural Resources, Tourism, and
Outdoor Recreation

Sierra Club Urges a NO vote on HB 4207 (Kurtz) – Prohibiting Rules on Residential Burning of Waste

Dear Representative Foster and members of the House Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Committee,

We appreciate you taking time to consider our position on HB 4207.

The Sierra Club urges you to vote NO on HB 4207 (Kurtz), a bill that would prohibit the Department of Environmental Quality from creating a rule to restrict residential burning of waste. When household garbage is burned, it produces smoke and release toxic gases. The smoke contains vapors and solid compounds suspended in the air called particulate matter. The particulate matter and toxic gases released during burning can be exceptionally irritating to people's health. People who are exposed to these air pollutants can experience eye and nose irritation, breathing difficulty, coughing, and headaches. People with heart disease, asthma, emphysema, or other respiratory diseases are especially sensitive to air pollutants. Burning of residential waste releases toxic chemicals including nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), and polycyclic organic matter (POMs). Burning plastic and treated wood also releases heavy metals and toxic chemicals such as dioxins, which are highly toxic and can cause reproductive and developmental problems, damage the immune system, interfere with hormones and also cause cancer. Other health problems aggravated by burning include worsened allergies, and lung infections such as acute pneumonia and bronchiolitis. Burning trash can cause other long-term health problems as well.

In the long run, HB 4207 would directly result in added costs to the State of Michigan and private citizens through impacts on public health. Fundamentally, this bill will prevent the DEQ from keeping our air clean, a duty which is of the utmost importance to the citizens of the great state of Michigan.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote NO on HB 4207. Votes pertaining to this bill will be included in the Sierra Club's legislative scorecard.

Sincerely,

Mike Berkowitz
Chapter Organizer
Michigan Sierra Club